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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Lyndon DATE 10/6/21
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

AUGUST 16

1. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN PHU YEN, KHANH HOA AND CAM RANH PROMISES TO BE RATHER PRO-FORMA AFFAIR. NUMBER OF CANDIDATES RUNNING MUCH SMALLER THAN NATIONAL NORM, AND ALL ARE OF NON-CONTROVERSIAL VARIETY. NONE OF LEADING POLITICIANS OF AREA ARE RUNNING, LEAVING FIELD TO LESSER LOCAL LIGHTS, MILITARY CANDIDATES, AND NON-RESIDENTS. OF SIX SEATS AT STAKE IN THREE CONSTITUENCIES, AT LEAST TWO AND POSSIBLE THREE WILL BE WON BY MILITARY.

2. LOCAL BUDDHIST INSTITUTE PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION WILL BE GRUDGIN AND UNENTHUSIASTIC. BUDDHISTS LIKELY TO ATTEMPT PARTIAL BOYCOTT OF PROCEEDINGS, OR MAY

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CAST ILLEGAL BALLOTS. HOWEVER, DESPITE BUDDHIST INTENTIONS TO CONTRARY, LOCAL AUTHORITIES PREDICT GOOD TURNOUT (70 PERCENT IN PHU YEN, 70-80 PERCENT IN KHANH HOA AND 80 PERCENT IN CAM RANH). ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS COMING ALONG NORMALLY, AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS CONFIDENT THAT SITUATION WELL IN HAND.

3. PHU YEN: THREE SLATES WILL CONTEST PHU YEN'S TWO SEATS IN ASSEMBLY, DOWN FROM ORIGINAL FIELD OF SIX (ONE LIST WAS DISQUALIFIED, TWO WITHDREW). FIRST LIST INCLUDES INDEPENDENT LAWYERS LY VAN HIEP, 37, AND TRAN DUC LONG, 41. HIEP HAS PRACTICE IN TUY HOA, LONG IN NHA

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TRANG. BOTH ARE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND NOMINALLY BUDDHIST. SECOND LIST IS VNQDD. ITS MEMBERS ARE PHAM CAO, 47, AND VO CHI SY, 50, OFFICERS OF VY DANG DO FACTION IN PHU YEN. THIRD LIST IS CAO DAI, COMPOSED OF VO THUONG KINH, 43, AND DANG QUANG MINH, 39.

4. HIEP APPEARS TO ENJOY CONSIDERABLE RESPECT FOR HIS SCHOLARSHIP AND RELATIVELY SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS, AND IS PROBABLY ACCEPTABLE TO BROADER RANGE OF VOTERS THAN IS EITHER CAO OR KINH. HE SHOULD WIN ONE SEAT, WITH KINH BEATING OUT CAO FOR SECOND, IF ONLY BECAUSE CAO DAI CONSIDERABLY MORE NUMEROUS THAN VNQDD IN PHU YEN.

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ALLIANCE OBVIOUSLY NO LONGER ACTIVE. THIRD MAJOR COMPONENT OF ALLIANCE WERE CATHOLICS. HOWEVER, CATHOLIC LEADER IN PHU YEN SPECULATED THAT MOST OF CATHOLIC VOTE LIKELY TO GO TO HIEP.)

5. MAJOR ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENT IN PHU YEN TO DATE HAS BEEN WITHDRAWAL OF HUYNH DIEU, CHAIRMAN OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL. ALTHOUGH DIEU CLAIMS TO HAVE WITHDRAWN BECAUSE OF PRESS OF BUSINESS IN TUY HOA (HE IS PRINCIPAL OF BUDDHIST HIGH SCHOOL) AND LOSS OF PRESTIGE DUE TO INEFFECTIVENESS OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, REAL REASON APPEARS TO BE THAT HIS CANDIDACY NOT AUTHORIZED BY LOCAL BUDDHIST HIERARCHY. DIEU WOULD HAVE BEEN ALMOST CERTAIN WINNER IN SEPTEMBER. HIS WITHDRAWAL REMOVES SOME OF LUSTER FROM ELECTION IN TUY HOA, AND IS FAIRLY CLEAR INDICATOR OF BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TOWARD EVENT.

6. KHANH HOA: ONLY TWO LISTS ARE COMPETING FOR KHANH HOA'S THREE SEATS IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY--FEWER THAN IN ANY OTHER CONSTITUENCY OF COMPARABLE SIZE. ONE LIST IS MILITARY, THE SECOND MADE UP OF YOUNG SAIGON

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INTELLECTUALS. NONE ARE NATIVES OF KHANH HOA. (ONE LIST NATIVE TO PROVINCE WAS DISQUALIFIED. OFFICIALLY STATED REASON WAS THAT NUMBER TWO MAN, [b-1 ed
HAD VC CONNECTIONS. IT APPEARS THAT
MEMBER OF TAN DFI VIET PARTY, WAS LONG-TIME TROUBLE-MAKER AND GENERALLY UNDISTINGUISHED. COMMUNIST CONNECTION WAS CONVENIENT PEG TO HANG HIM ON. PROVINCIAL DECISION WAS UPHELD BY SAIGON REVIEW BOARD.)

7. MILITARY LIST INCLUDES DR. PHAM KE TOAI, 32 YEAR OLD CAPTAIN IN MEDICAL CORPS; PHAM QUANG HO, 32, SPECIAL FORCES CAPTAIN; AND TRAN DOC LAN, 29, ASPIRANT.

8. CIVILIAN LIST COMPOSED OF HOANG NGOC CAN, 32; VU DINH LONG, 30; AND MRS. NGUYEN THI KIM GIAO, 27. CAN AND LONG ARE PROFESSORS AT SAIGON U., MRS. GIAO IS PHARMACIST. ONLY CONNECTION THIS GROUP HAS WITH KHANH HOA IS PAST AFILIATION OF CAN AND LONG WITH OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE (CAN IS FORMER DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE).

9. TOAI IS REPORTEDLY MEMBER OF CATHOLICS CITIZENS BLOC. AND HO APPARENTLY ALSO CATHOLIC [b-1 ed

SAID TOAI'S LIST WOULD RECEIVE SUPPORT OF KHANH HOA'S

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CATHOLIC-DAI VIET BLOC. CIVILIAN SLATE IS NOMINALLY BUDDHIST. ALTHOUGH THEY EMPHASIZE INDEPENDENT CHARACTER OF THEIR CANDIDACIES, THEY HAVE SOLICITED SUPPORT FROM MR. BUI LIEN, LEADING BUDDHIST LAYMEN IN KHANH HOA. TOAI AND CAN ARE CERTAIN WINNERS. THIRD SEAT APPEARS TO BE TOSSUP BETWEEN HO AND LONG.

10. PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES BELIEVE BUDDHIST BOYCOTT DISTINCT POSSIBILITY. LEAFLETS OF FATHER HOANG QUYNH'S FRONT OF CITIZENS OF ALL RELIGIONS DENOUNCING ELECTION HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING IN NHA TRANG, AND PAGODAS ARE ALLEGEDLY PASSING WORD NOT TO PARTICIPATE. BUI LIEN SAID THAT LOCAL BUDDHISTS HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED DIRECTIVE

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FROM VIEN HOA DAO REGARDING ELECTION, BUT INTIMATED THAT BUDDHIST PARTICIPATION CONTINGENT ON GVN RELEASING "STRUGGLE" PRISONERS. KHANH HOA DEPUTY FOR ADMINISTRATION NONETHELESS BELIEVES 80 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE WILL GO TO POLLS, FOR SIMPLE REASON THAT AUTHORITIES WILL WORK VIGOROUSLY TO STIMULATE LARGE TURNOUT. IF THIS PERSUASION NOT APPLIED, HE FEELS PARTICIPATION WOULD DROP TO 50 PERCENT

11. CAM RANH: FOUR CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING FOR CAM RANH SEAT IN ASSEMBLY. THEY ARE: TANG QUYNH VAN, RETIRED CIVIL SERVANT; NGUYEN HUU TO, NAVY LT.; LE

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THIEN NGO, ENGINEER FROM SAIGON; AND HO THANH HAI, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE CHIEF FOR KHANH HOA PROVINCE.

12. [redacted], CONSIDERS LT. TO HEAVY FAVORITE. TO IS 36, NOMINAL BUDDHIST, AND WAS ELECTED TO LAST DIEM-ERA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1963. TO LIKELY TO RUN WELL AMONG MILITARY POPULATION OF CAM RANH, AND REPORTEDLY HAS SUPPORT OF LEADING LOCAL BONZE AS WELL.

13. [redacted] BELIEVES LOCAL BUDDHIST LEADERSHIP QUITE REASONABLE, BUT NOTED THAT LESS RESPONSIBLE ELEMENT HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTING HOANG QUYNH ANTI-ELECTION LEAFLETS. [redacted] FORESEES NO SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN ELECTION, AND FEELS THAT 80 PERCENT OF CAM RANH'S 15,000 VOTERS WILL GO TO POLLS.

14. NOTE: EMBASSY HAS BEEN REPORTING ELECTION SITUATION IN PROVINCES BY AIRGRAM. WITH ELECTION DATE CLOSER AND AS INFORMATION FLOWS IN, WE WILL NOW BEGIN TO REPORT OUR MAJOR FINDINGS BY TELEGRAM. LODGE.
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